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President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 10

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1)

The President (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his report to the General Assembly at the 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2004.

Mr. Van den Berg (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro align themselves with this statement.

The European Union wishes to express its appreciation for the concise but comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. The European Union shares the view of the Secretary-General that the United Nations has had an extraordinary and challenging year, with ongoing and newly developing crisis situations. Clearly, some of the challenges have been around for longer periods of time, but in several cases we are making slower progress in addressing them than the situation calls for. The results, in several cases, have been mixed at best.

The political crises we are facing and the need to meet the increasing demands for peacekeeping and humanitarian emergencies can seem overwhelming, but it is essential that we meet the challenges. Several conclusions are clear. Conflict prevention and post-conflict situations need to be handled in a better manner. Our joint efforts in combating terrorists and the proliferation of weapons, in particular weapons of mass destruction, must be increased. We must all work for worldwide respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We should not cease in our efforts to fight HIV/AIDS and other major diseases, fight poverty and the growing gap between rich and poor, both between and within countries, stop global crime and redress environmental degradation.

In the view of the European Union (EU), the United Nations is uniquely placed to provide the framework for international cooperation. It has no substitute in the international community. However, in order to be more effective, the Organization has to adapt to changing conditions. This requires, most of all, an open and constructive attitude by its Member States and a willingness to support change. But it also requires an Organization that focuses on priorities, intensifies its internal cooperation, coordination and coherence, improves its human resources management and strengthens its budget process and its accountability. The EU gave its views on these matters during the joint plenary debate last Monday.

The EU itself is strongly committed to supporting these efforts to strengthen the United Nations. It has

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committed itself to effective multilateralism as a central element of its external action. We believe that none of the current international challenges can be tackled in an isolated manner or unilaterally. We understand that our security and development are inextricably linked to the security and development of others.

Our objective is the development of a stronger international community, well-functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order, within the fundamental framework of the United Nations Charter. The United Nations is, in our view, at the core of such an international order.

In this regard, we must intensify our efforts to reach a consensus on changes in the institutional architecture, in order to assure that our objectives in the areas of peace, security, development and good governance are met. We considered the establishment by the Secretary-General of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to be of the highest importance. We look forward to discussing the Panel's report and the Secretary-General's recommendations thereon in a constructive manner. We also look forward to the report by the Millennium Project and to discussing the follow-up to the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization and the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations.

The EU considers the high-level event at the beginning of the 2005 General Assembly a logical culmination of this process. We see this event as a key opportunity to agree on or reaffirm fundamental principles and to agree on urgent measures to achieve all the commitments of the Millennium Declaration, including the Millennium Development Goals. The event should encourage progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits and conferences in the economic and social areas, including, in particular, the follow-up to the Monterrey and Johannesburg summits. The EU will present more detailed views on this subject during our debate in November on the follow-up to the Millennium Summit and the follow-up to the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

The EU welcomes the continued trend towards strengthening partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations in the shared pursuit of peace, stability and development in the various regions. In particular, we wish to commend and support the enhanced role of the African Union and its peace and security structures in the stabilization of regional crises. The EU is aware of its responsibility as a regional organization in the areas of conflict prevention, crisis management and peacekeeping operations. The September 2003 Joint Declaration on United Nations-European Union Cooperation in Crisis Management provided a framework for both organizations to develop practical avenues for expanded cooperation. A joint consultative mechanism consisting of a United Nations-EU steering committee on crisis management activities oversees the implementation of this Declaration.

Finally, the Secretary-General mentions in his report the crucial role that the United Nations has played in the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the arrangements for the commencement of its operations. Without the United Nations, the ICC would not exist. The purposes of the United Nations and of the ICC are mutually reinforcing, and close cooperation between the United Nations and the ICC should now proceed, on the basis of the relationship agreement that entered into force on 3 October 2004. More than half of the United Nations Members — 97 States — have now become parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and we encourage an even wider ratification. The ICC is now operational, with two situations being investigated by the prosecutor. The EU recalls its continuous support for the ICC and the efforts of the international community to fight impunity. We are firmly convinced that the Rome Statute provides all the necessary safeguards against the use of the Court for politically motivated purposes, and are committed to preserving the integrity of the Statute.

Let me conclude by applauding the Secretary-General and his staff for the work they have undertaken in the past year, often under extremely difficult circumstances, and for always acting within the framework of the principles and purposes of the Charter. Allow me to remind Member States that we will have to take decisions on a potentially major overhaul of the safety and security policies of the Organization, both for Headquarters and in the field. The EU looks forward to receiving the Secretariat's report on safety and security, and will support appropriate improvements in security measures. Let me

assure you that the European Union is, and will be, on your side.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, who is also speaking on behalf of Australia and New Zealand.

Mr. Laurin (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I am pleased to address the Assembly on behalf of New Zealand, Australia and Canada under agenda item 10, the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on behalf of our three delegations, on your election as President of the fifty-ninth session, and to assure you of our constructive cooperation and support in the year ahead. We also offer our congratulations to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report, which in so many ways reflects the quality of his own leadership, highlights both the Organization's successes and its shortcomings over the past year and underlines the challenges we face. These are challenges, which, in our view, are unprecedented in their scope and in their potential gravity.

(*spoke in English*)

For those of us convinced that a more just and secure world requires effective multilateral institutions, these are times of serious concern, including the concern that, as we speak here today, human tragedies continue to unfold, most notably in the Darfur region of Sudan. Our peoples increasingly question why the collective international will embodied in this Organization seems so tenuous in responding, and why we seemingly permit the mantra of sovereignty to shelter the abusers rather than the abused, including women and children, who are often the first and most helpless victims.

We have jointly spoken previously in this Hall of the responsibility of Governments to protect the people in their charge and of the obligation of the international community to exercise that responsibility on a temporary basis whenever that most fundamental of obligations is egregiously ignored.

We have many means at our disposal to prevent, deter and respond to crimes against our common humanity and to bring the perpetrators to account for their actions. The International Criminal Court, for example, has an essential role to play in facilitating justice and accountability, particularly through the principle of complementarity, which is an essential feature of the Court's statute.

We live in perilous times. Armed conflict continues to take innocent lives in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere. The threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction hangs over us. Terrorist acts continue unabated. It need not be so. We must do more in this Organization by way of an effective response. We note with satisfaction in this regard the efforts being made to strengthen the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

In countries with their own tragic histories — Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Liberia, East Timor, and elsewhere — the United Nations is contributing significantly to the difficult but tentatively promising process of economic recovery and reconciliation. The United Nations can and should play a similar role in Iraq to fulfil its mandate under Security Council resolution 1546 (2004), most critically through supporting Iraqis in the holding of elections on schedule, no later than 31 January 2005.

We also take this opportunity to recognize once again the military, civilian police and civilian personnel in peacekeeping operations, both as deployed in traditional blue-helmet missions — in greater numbers than for many years — and in national uniform serving in missions authorized by the Security Council. We honour those among them who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of peace.

As the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization notes, last year this Assembly, for the first time, adopted a historic resolution on the prevention of armed conflict (resolution 57/337), based on the Secretary-General's earlier report on the subject (A/55/985 and Corr.1). It also endorsed the integration of conflict prevention across the funds and programmes of the United Nations system. We applaud the Secretary-General for his leadership in taking this process forward.

We recognize, however, that threats take many forms, and for those whose nations are mired in poverty, whose populations must live and die with the HIV/AIDS pandemic on a scale others among us cannot imagine or which have suffered cataclysmic natural disasters, national security has connotations no less serious even if the threats they face are different in character.

Our three Governments are united in our commitment to a broad concept of security in which the security of the individual human being is paramount and must be addressed in a number of dimensions. In that respect, we share the report's hope for greater progress in attaining the Millennium Development Goals. We urge all Member States to contribute to the efforts described in the report to stem the flow of small arms and light weapons. We strongly endorse the call in the report for those States that have not ratified the Ottawa Convention to do so promptly and for all States to participate in the first review conference of the Convention, to be held in Nairobi a month from now. And we are among those who share the disquiet noted in the report regarding the dysfunctional elements of the United Nations human rights machinery, including the continued election to the Commission on Human Rights of Governments that are themselves accused of gross human rights violations.

Working to enhance our security in all these respects are the civilian personnel of this Organization and those associated with it, in whose daily lives the element of risk is increasing. We appreciate the measures taken thus far to deal with this serious issue, particularly following the events in Baghdad last year, which took the lives of so many of this Organization's very finest. As the Assembly moves to implement further security enhancement measures — and we know they will not be cheap — we owe it to those we have lost and to those who follow in their footsteps, to do our utmost to protect them and their families.

If there is a common theme in all of this it is that of unprecedented change and challenge. We must face the fact that across our world today the United Nations is seen by many to be falling short of its potential and its purpose. The report, to its credit, does not shrink from this reality, while underlining that without the commitment and support of Member States that potential cannot be realized.

The process of administrative and budgetary reform must continue and be accelerated. The United Nations must reach out as never before to civil society, including the private sector, as underlined in the United Nations Development Programme report entitled "Unleashing entrepreneurship: making business work for the poor", and the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society relations (A/58/817 and Corr.1).

Perhaps most immediately critical, however, in terms of the fork in the road of which the Secretary-General spoke a year ago, will be our collective response to the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. Its recommendations and the Secretary General's response to them promise to be of historic significance. So too should be our collective response. If this Organization is to remain relevant, it cannot be more of the same. We must be prepared to make difficult compromises and take bold decisions. If we do not, history will move this Organization to its margins. We cannot permit that to happen.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Following the general debate of the last two weeks, today's meeting, on the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1), provides a further opportunity to debate issues of great importance and concern to the international community, as well as an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the central and irreplaceable role of the United Nations in meeting the objectives for peace and development, as set out in the Millennium Declaration.

An attentive reading of the report of the Secretary-General and a lucid analysis of his assessment of the achievements of the Organization over the past year lead us once again to the following conclusion: the pressing need for a strong and effective Organization better able to serve the interests of States and people in this new era marked by increased globalization, which in turn leads to the globalization of the concept of security.

Global problems today are of such a scale and complexity that they can be solved only through collective action founded on the values of solidarity, universality and multilateralism as embodied by the United Nations.

The United Nations brings together almost all countries of the world, and its activities impact on almost all aspects of human activity. Those characteristics have made it a unique and ideal forum for the exchange of information, the holding of negotiations and the elaboration of standards and policies, the expression of aspirations, the orientation of the conduct of States and other partners and the implementation of collective action plans.

Member States must do more than simply reaffirm the relevance of the United Nations. They

must also ensure that the Organization performs its tasks as effectively as possible and act as a catalyst of change in a rapidly changing world that is facing new challenges.

In that context, Algeria hopes that the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will be able to make innovative and consistent recommendations founded on a stringent analysis of global threats to international peace and security and on an in-depth examination of the institutions and mechanisms existing within the United Nations. Therefore, Member States must carry out an objective examination, without complacency, of issues related to the reform of the United Nations in the light of the conclusions and recommendations to be issued by the High-level Panel, and must work constructively to implement the radical reforms that our Organization needs.

While pursuing those ambitious endeavours, Member States must also bear in mind that the great strength of this Organization lies in its legitimacy, which in turn is rooted in the fundamental principles of international law as accepted by all States and expressed by the international community as a whole. It is from that legitimacy that the United Nations is able to draw the authority required in order to ensure that its decisions are respected.

The United Nations is more than a simple tool, for beyond the varied fields of action in which it is engaged, its aim, as reflected in the Charter, is to transform relations among States, to manage global affairs and to respond to the needs and hopes of the world's peoples. That immense task entrusted to us by the founders of the United Nations some 60 years ago will be fulfilled only if we work together in a pragmatic and clear-headed manner. At the same time, we must show creativity and daring by helping the United Nations to do its best to adapt to the global realities of the twenty-first century.

My delegation would like to comment briefly on some salient aspects of the report of the Secretary-General, bearing in mind that in coming weeks we will be addressing further important issues on our agenda.

With regard to peace and international security, the report of the Secretary-General once again highlights the fact that there are ongoing violent conflicts worldwide, which have cost millions of lives among civilians, have had an impact on neighbouring countries and have endangered international peace and security.

Africa has done a great deal to resolve the crises that face it. But it continues to be the continent most sorely afflicted by conflict, as can be seen from the agenda of the Security Council. While we welcome the positive developments in the situations in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and in the Comoros, other nascent and full-blown conflicts require our attention.

In the areas of preventing conflict, restoring peace, peace-building and peacekeeping, combating poverty and illness and promoting development, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is more necessary than ever before. Therefore, cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union and subregional organizations on the African continent must address the whole range of serious issues facing Africa.

In that context, Algeria particularly welcomes the cooperation of the United Nations in developing and implementing guidelines for setting up the structures of the African Union's Peace and Security Council, in particular by helping to establish the African Standby Force and the Union's Military Staff Committee. Through the African Union, the subregional bodies and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Africa is now able to draw upon frameworks and mechanisms that are better suited to the kinds of problems that we must solve.

With regard to combating the AIDS pandemic, my delegation agrees with the Secretary-General that "[t]he fight against HIV/AIDS requires strong global leadership, effective global partnership and sustained global action" (*A/59/1, para. 4*). Algeria welcomes the initiative launched by the World Health Organization and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, which aims to provide antiretroviral treatment for some 3 million individuals suffering from AIDS by the end of 2005. This is an initiative which will make possible the survival of at least half of the 6 million individuals suffering from AIDS in developing countries, the majority of whom dwell in Africa.

The United Nations must continue its action in the fight against terrorism. We are well aware of the persistent threat that terrorism poses to peace and international security. In this respect, we share the view of the Secretary-General that we need to combat terrorism while at the same time ensuring full respect

for fundamental freedoms and human dignity. But we must also emphasize that in resolution 58/174 the General Assembly recalled the reference in last year's report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration to the fact that "[T]errorism itself is a violation of fundamental human rights and must be combated as such" (*A/58/323, para. 28*).

The report of the Secretary-General furthermore emphasizes the need for increased international cooperation to combat that scourge using existing mechanisms.

Among the counter-terrorism activities carried out during the past year, the Secretary-General recalls Security Council resolution 1535 (2004) on the revitalization of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in order to strengthen its effectiveness while enhancing all the Committee's activities to prevent and suppress terrorism.

The report also emphasizes that the Vienna-based United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, working in close coordination with the Counter-Terrorism Committee, has provided technical assistance to more than 70 countries in connection with the ratification and implementation of the 12 universal anti-terrorism conventions and the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). It notes also that in 2004 the connection between terrorism and organized crime was discussed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

My delegation welcomes all of these actions, which demonstrate the determination of the international community to combat this scourge. At the same time, however, we feel that it is only through the development of a comprehensive anti-terrorism convention that we will be able to put an end to these dangerous movements, which tend to lead to confusion between the legitimate liberation struggle of peoples and the terrible phenomenon of terrorism.

Mr. Sychov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus views the past year as having been a period of difficult and intensive work by our Organization, its agencies and its institutions. The Secretary-General has repeatedly drawn our attention to the fact that the range of challenges facing the Organization is constantly expanding, and that their complexity and their importance for the international community are constantly increasing.

We believe in the Organization's ability to considerably strengthen its lead coordinating role in mobilizing the efforts of Member States when confronting new challenges and threats. In that regard, we welcomed the Security Council's adoption of its resolution 1535 (2004), which formed the basis for the creation of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, which includes a special office for providing technical assistance to States. We hope that these structural reforms will help strengthen the operational coordination between the Counter-Terrorism Committee and Governments, thus improving the impact of the Committee's work.

An important step in the work of the Organization was the Security Council's adoption of its resolution 1540 (2004), by which we are taking a new approach to the question of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by linking that problem to the growth in the terrorist threat. For that resolution to be successfully implemented, in is important that States submit comprehensive national reports. For our part, the Government of the Republic of Belarus intends to submit our national report on time.

The Secretary-General has drawn our attention to the surge in the number of local conflicts and the increased demand for United Nations peacekeeping operations. The setting up of new operations and the increased scale of current ones require increased activity by the relevant Secretariat units and place a heavy burden on the financial resources of the Organization.

In our view, we should tackle this situation in two ways. First, there is a need to enhance the participation of interested regional associations and organizations which can effectively organize and carry out peacekeeping activities. In particular, we welcome the African Union's desire to take an increasingly active role in peacekeeping operations, specifically in Africa. However, the United Nations should coordinate and direct peacekeeping activities carried out by regional organizations

Secondly, it is important to organize, with the help of the most economically powerful States, large-scale training of potential peacekeepers for interested regional organizations and developing countries. In that context, it is important to note that during the general debate, a number of far-reaching initiatives were proposed for a rational, pragmatic approach.

My country has great military and civilian potential and is interested in expanding its participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations. It is taking practical steps to establish a legal basis for such participation and for training peacekeeping personnel.

The Government of the Republic of Belarus supports strengthening the role of the United Nations in the political reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan in the light of the preparations for national parliamentary and presidential elections in those war-affected countries. The United Nations has great experience in organizing democratic elections in post-conflict countries and can make a valuable contribution to the post-war reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan.

We note with regret that the United Nations has not yet been able to make a significant impact on the process of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and implementing the road map. In that connection, we call on the Secretary-General to intensify his mediation activities in that area in order to resolve the most problematic issues between the parties to the conflict.

We welcome the Organization's work in protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, and we welcome the work of the Commission on Human Rights. In that context, we can only agree with the Secretary-General with respect to the high level of politicization of the Commission's debates and the fact that a selective approach is taken in considering situations involving human rights violations. The Republic of Belarus has repeatedly stated its position of principle on this issue. We share and support the desire of most members of the Commission to avoid unnecessary politicization of the Commission's work so that it can carry out its functions as the principal human rights body of the United Nations, able to respond promptly, effectively and even-handedly to the new challenges with respect to massive violations of human rights. Only by adopting a constructive approach and renouncing double standards can the global human rights situation be improved.

Our delegation commends the efforts of the United Nations to promote the Millennium Development Goals and to incorporate them into the activities of the main bodies of the United Nations system. We hope that the General Assembly's high-level meeting in 2005 will conduct a thorough analysis of the five years of implementation of the Millennium Declaration and of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic, social and related fields.

At the same time, we are concerned that in implementing the Millennium Development Goals, priority attention has gone to the social and humanitarian goals, while economic issues have been given lower priority. Without denying the urgent importance of resolving social and humanitarian problems, we are convinced that Governments, Member States and international organizations in the United Nations system need to step up their efforts to meet the economic challenges set out in the Millennium Declaration. Creating favourable conditions for sustainable development is vital to eradicating hunger and poverty, ensuring respect for human rights, mitigating the threat of terrorism, preventing armed conflict and eliminating dangerous epidemics.

It will be impossible to overcome those challenges without a revitalized, institutionally strong and effectively functioning United Nations whose activities are founded on the principles of multilateralism in international relations, the rule of law in international affairs and collective and fair solutions to global problems. In that regard, the delegation of Belarus calls upon Member States to adopt a well-balanced approach to the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General's recently established High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

We express our readiness to cooperate closely with other delegations to find common approaches to the major problems related to establishing a new international order.

Mr. Aboul Atta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation thanks the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their efforts towards achieving the Organization's objectives as defined in the Charter and by the resolutions adopted by Member States.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1) discusses very important issues deserving of our attention. We wish to comment on them, but time constraints oblige us to concentrate on just a few. The Egyptian position on all issues covered in the report will be expressed during the discussion of the individual items of the agenda of the fifty-ninth session in plenary meetings and in the Main Committees. Today, I shall touch on the following issues.

First, even a cursory glance at the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the report's discussion of the issue reflect a single truth. Despite the constant efforts of the international community and parties in the region, notably including Egypt, the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory has worsened, and the resolutions adopted are not being implemented. There are occasional glimmers of hope that agreements concluded and initiatives adopted will be implemented, but realities on the ground undermine that hope. That is so because the occupying Power is not committed to the principles of international law. It has not heeded the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and ignores the Fourth Geneva Convention and the provisions of international humanitarian law.

Secondly, we note that the Organization has stepped up its peace-building activities. That has led to administrative difficulties for the Organization. It is important to develop a rapid response capability for dealing with crises as soon as they emerge. We need an integrated strategy, including all related elements and clear timelines, for the various phases of peacekeeping, peace-building and capacity-building in countries in conflict. That would enable Member States to anticipate the human and material resources needed for such operations.

That issue is very important because it directly affects the safety and security of United Nations personnel. And that in turn is important to us because United Nations personnel is a treasure valued by all. We believe that we cannot provide security if we spend enormous amounts of money without having a clear plan rooted in a solid culture of security, with an administrative approach including a clear chain of command, specific responsibilities, expertise and competencies ensuring high-level performance in this very important field. Therefore, we must undertake a comprehensive review of the Organization's capabilities and expertise in this area, making use of the conclusions of the many committees that have been created, the expert studies done and the reviews carried out. That approach was endorsed by the General Assembly at its previous session and constitutes a very important contribution that must be taken into consideration.

Thirdly, terrorism is still a threat to international peace and security and that requires more efficient action by the international community. Here we would like to emphasize the important role undertaken by all of the multilateral international bodies — in particular the Security Council and the General Assembly — on the basis of complementarity rather than competition and within the context of emphasizing the responsibilities entrusted to each of them in accordance with the Charter.

Fourthly, we welcome the efforts made by the Special Adviser on Africa and his Office in presenting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and mobilizing international support and efforts to bring about its objectives. We would like to underline the importance of supporting that office with the human and material resources needed to achieve its objective.

We have noted that, despite the efforts made by the Organization, concrete steps to implement specific programmes and projects that have been set up with within the context of NEPAD, have not received the necessary priority within the framework of development policies for Africa, by donor States.

We look forward to revitalizing the interaction between the United Nations, as manifested by the Office of the Special Adviser, and the many initiatives made individually, or by many other bodies, in order to bring about efficient and effective projects and programmes in the areas of social, environmental and economic development, and peace and security.

Therefore, we should try to avoid double standards and diversion of international interest so we can bring about development in Africa as set forth in the NEPAD Initiative.

Fifthly and finally, we would like to make the following preliminary remarks concerning the strengthening of the United Nations. First, the proposed programme budget of the Organization must reflect the priorities in the medium term plan, as they are more comprehensive. We should provide the necessary funding for all of the activities endorsed by the Member States.

Secondly, developing the work of the Organization is a matter that should be left to the leadership of the Member States and to what they agree on. It should be done with a clear view of the responsibilities of those who are involved.

Thirdly, the concepts of transparency, accountability and assessment must be supported

within the Organization at all levels in order to guarantee the work efficiency to which all of us at the United Nations look forward.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): In his report on the work of the Organization the Secretary General described the past year as an extraordinarily challenging year for the United Nations. Our delegation agrees that there have been great difficulties and in the circumstances we should congratulate the Secretary-General for his stewardship and for guiding the Organization in the implementation of its various mandates. Although there have been mixed results, the overall picture is one of an organization that has remained engaged and active where the needs have arisen.

Prevailing conditions have not been helpful for the maintenance of peace and security. The cycle of war and violence regrettably continued unabated, damaging the prospects for stability and peace, while doctrines promoting military power and the use of force, and the upsurge of terrorism have served to undermine the fabric of international security.

The conflicts in the Middle East and in Africa have been the most prominent. In Iraq the role of the United Nations has been limited despite the adoption of Security Council resolution 1546 (2004). The Secretary-General has been justifiably cautious, as the prevailing security situation has made it too risky for a more ambitious programme for United Nations involvement. The major responsibility will lie in the hands of the coalition forces to rebuild Iraq. In the meantime, efforts will have to be concentrated on establishing a political framework for ensuring stability and security. Until that is achieved, it is difficult to see how the United Nations role could be enlarged.

In the Middle East the situation has continued to deteriorate over the past year, and events have confirmed the need for a more even-handed approach in order to advance a settlement based on justice and legality. Judging from the events of the past year, the Quartet has not been fulfilling that role or exercising the influence that is needed.

In Africa there have been some positive developments over the year but the recent events in Darfur in the Sudan have led to a new crisis. We commend the Secretary-General for his efforts and welcome the collaboration that has developed with the African Union in seeking a solution.

In other areas of tension and conflict, it is quite evident that the United Nations has been active and we congratulate the Secretary-General for his quiet diplomacy, which has helped to avoid the outbreak of hostilities, promote reconciliation and encourage the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The work of the United Nations peacekeepers and peace-builders has continued to multiply, with a total of 16 missions now in the field with the addition of those in Haiti, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Burundi. Obviously, the growing number and scale of the operations pose a challenge to the Organization's capacity to provide sustainable support for such operations.

What is of utmost importance is to ensure that there is an exit strategy that can be implemented without risking a relapse into conflict. National recovery and assistance in strengthening the social and economic underpinnings of war-torn societies continue to be necessary to ensure the durability of peace and stability.

We are still hopeful about the situation in Haiti, but anxieties have increased because of the unsettled security situation, political uncertainties and setbacks caused by the hurricane disaster.

We believe that greater urgency should be introduced in mobilizing the resources from the $1.3 billion package of pledges to go towards political, social and economic needs. As far as the political situation is concerned, while we do not fully share the Secretary-General's assessment in paragraph 58 of his report, we support his insistence on the need for the United Nations to remain engaged for the long term, both politically and financially.

In the field of disarmament, there is a clear need to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament, whose work has been stalled in an atmosphere of weakened political commitment to disarmament efforts. The growth of military expenditures and the promotion of militarism have undermined the political will to move forward. That is a contributing factor to proliferation, as a non-proliferation regime can only succeed where mutual and reciprocal obligations are honoured and where the principle of non-discrimination is upheld.

The dangers of proliferation are increased by the upsurge of terrorism in recent times. We all have an obligation to confront that challenge but too much

emphasis is being placed on military operations. Our view is that a successful campaign requires a more serious effort to eliminate the root causes of terrorism. Conditions of injustice, deprivation or oppression, which are conducive to the development of extremist ideas and activities, require our full attention.

The Secretary-General, in his statement on 28 September, rightly emphasized the importance of the rule of law, which is increasingly at risk around the world. At the national level, it is an important aspect of the stability and survival of States and, similarly, at the level of world order. The Organization has created an important body of norms and laws and it is the duty of all States to uphold legality in international relations. This applies to all.

The United Nations should never accept or tolerate double standards, selectivity or discriminatory practices. They violate principles of justice and equal rights, which is an important basis for cooperation and stability in the international system.

In the area of humanitarian commitments, the work and achievements of the United Nations over the past year have been solid and commendable. The report amply shows how much has been accomplished in relation to assistance to refugees and relief during humanitarian emergencies.

Obviously, not all needs have been met. As the Secretary-General tells us, the Organization has been operating in a situation of underfunding, which has persisted all year. We are disappointed to learn that, both in absolute and proportional terms, funding was lower than for the same period in 2003. We support the Secretary-General's initiatives to promote and secure greater resources, so that hardship and suffering can be reduced, especially among the vulnerable groups.

The work of the United Nations in promoting development cooperation is of particular importance for developing countries. The work done by the various agencies in operational activities has been an important source of development assistance and we urge that as much of the resources as is available be deployed in implementing concrete projects and programmes. It is important to avoid excessive preoccupation with designing frameworks and integrated systems, which only increase the bureaucratic component and reduce the resources available for programme delivery.

From reading the report, we feel that there is need to give greater impetus to efforts for sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Regrettably, there are signs that those objectives may increasingly be overshadowed by the preoccupation with terrorism and security issues.

We particularly hope that the United Nations will give special attention to the special needs of the disadvantaged, to the least development countries, the landlocked States and the small island developing States. In the case of the latter, the review of the Barbados Programme of Action, which has been postponed until next year, should receive the full support of the Secretariat in ensuring that the Conference and its outcome will achieve positive results.

In general, Jamaica believes that, in the area of international economic cooperation, more needs to be done by the United Nations to coordinate international policies. There is also the need for institutional strengthening for that purpose. A democratic forum is needed to coordinate international policies relating to finance, trade and technology. It should be capable of applying remedies to correct global imbalances and of responding to crises. We should regard that as an important part of what should be the outcome of the Summit during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

The international legal order has continued to evolve in a positive direction with the creation of new legal regimes, but the problem of gaining universality has dampened some of its success. The instruments of international cooperation are important in strengthening multilateralism and all should join in.

In the case of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the international Tribunals, it is important for the integrity of the system that perpetrators of war crimes are not sought only in developing countries. To have credibility the system should apply to everyone and it is weakened if exceptions are allowed. That principle applies even more broadly to the field of human rights protection and it would be unfortunate for the United Nations system if the same standards did not apply to all.

Regrettably, cases have arisen leading to charges of selective treatment and double standards. That is damaging to the image of the United Nations. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

and the Commission on Human Rights should be vigilant in maintaining uniform standards and equal requirements and should avoid politicization, which weakens the influence of the United Nations in the promotion of human rights.

In relation to the management of the Secretariat, we commend the Secretary-General for the reforms implemented since 1997, which have progressed reasonably well with the introduction of management practices to improve the effectiveness of the system.

The two-year budget cycle is now in place and we are looking forward to receiving the first proposed strategic framework for the 2006-2007 biennium, which is expected to be submitted sometime during this session.

We understand that the Secretary-General is seeking a larger and more substantive programme of reform based on the recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons, which is expected to be submitted to the Secretary-General this year. We hope the report will form a firm basis for reform and revitalization of the United Nations to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Jamaica will be ready to consider the report and its recommendations and we will make our contribution when it is put before us.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The Pakistani delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization. The Secretary-General has rightly described the past year as extraordinarily challenging for the United Nations. Pakistan has remained an active partner of the United Nations in its efforts to build a better future.

Over the past 12 months, international peace and security continued to be affected by old and new threats, internal conflicts, regional disputes, foreign occupation and terrorism. Disarmament remained stalled, while non-proliferation efforts continued to be marked by discriminatory approaches.

Humanitarian emergencies erupted, and poverty, hunger and infectious diseases claimed millions of lives. Along with deepening power asymmetries, wealth inequalities and socio-economic disparities all continued to be accentuated.

Pakistan fully shares the view that the instrument of multilateralism and the values of interdependence and shared responsibility are fundamental to achieving selective solutions to our common problems. Pakistan appreciates the efforts deployed by the United Nations and the Secretary-General in pursuit of international peace and security, through peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building.

The presence of the United Nations, particularly in Africa, is showing results, as situations in various countries stabilize. The challenges continue, of course, and require constructive engagement, rather than coercive strategies. The process is greatly helped as African leadership and institutions become increasingly involved in seeking African solutions to African problems.

The past year witnessed an unprecedented surge in the demand for United Nations peacekeeping operations. As the largest contributor to United Nations peacekeeping, Pakistan is proud of the contribution it is making to the maintenance of international peace and security. We agree with the Secretary-General that "[t]oday's operations will not succeed without the sustained political support and commitment of the Member States — and the right resources" (*A/59/1, para. 8*).

Pakistan is convinced that sustainable peace can only be assured in the long term by adopting a comprehensive conflict-prevention strategy addressing root causes of conflict, strengthening long-term capacities for the peaceful settlement of disputes and recognizing the inextricable link between peace and development.

Terrorism is the most abhorrent phenomenon of our times. The Secretary-General correctly emphasizes the need for broad-based international cooperation to counter this threat. Pakistan has remained in the vanguard of global efforts to fight this scourge. However, we must underline that, beyond determined action against terrorists, it is essential to have a clear, comprehensive and long-term strategy to strike at the root of the problem to ensure final success. We must work to develop a legal definition of terrorism by consensus. The strategy must also include measures to reduce poverty and address political and economic injustice.

Pakistan believes that it would be a grave historical error to opt for strategies of intervention and pre-emption to counter terrorism, prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)

or impose order in imploding States. Such strategies can be costly and counter-productive. We should not move away from the restraints in the Charter. External intervention and coercion are more likely to exacerbate, rather than ease, the threat of WMD proliferation. The quest of some States for weapons of mass destruction is often propelled by the fear of external intervention and aggression. Equitable and practical arrangements can, and should be, negotiated in open forums, to strengthen physical and export controls over sensitive materials and technology. The motivations for proliferation can be removed through conflict resolution and security assurances. The States possessing nuclear weapons — now eight, not five — must also work together to develop a realistic programme to achieve nuclear disarmament and prevent nuclear proliferation.

Speaking in the general debate on 22 September, at the 5th meeting, President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan emphasized that the time has come for closing fronts and ending conflicts through reconciliation and reform, harmony and peace. The front that must be closed on a priority basis is the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel, in the Middle East. Winding down the confrontation in Iraq is of equal importance. And we must all support Afghanistan's efforts towards peace, democracy and stability.

In South Asia, the Secretary-General has taken note of important strides by India and Pakistan in efforts to improve their relations and resolve outstanding issues. President Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India met for the first time in New York on 24 September. In a joint statement, both leaders reiterated their commitment to continue the bilateral dialogue to restore normalcy and cooperation between India and Pakistan. On Jammu and Kashmir, they agreed that "possible options for a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the issue should be explored in a sincere spirit and purposeful manner".

The High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change has been given the task to make "bold and practicable recommendations" (*ibid., para. 1*). It is Pakistan's belief that cooperative and democratic multilateralism, based on the principles of the Charter and pursued through the United Nations, offers the best paradigm for a future world order. Cooperative multilateralism should seek just, peaceful and durable solutions to conflicts and disputes. It should address the root causes of conflicts and chaos, rather than only their symptoms and consequences.

The plethora of today's threats to peace and security and the difficulties in addressing them effectively do not arise from institutional weaknesses of the United Nations or the irrelevance of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. They are indeed largely a consequence of the neglect of the principles of the Charter. It would therefore be a tragedy if the United Nations, dedicated to promote peace and conflict resolution, were to itself succumb to the logic of power rather than uphold the power of our Charter's principles.

The Security Council acts on behalf of the general membership of the United Nations. It should be accountable to the General Assembly. Its work should be more transparent and its decision-making more democratic. It should be enlarged to reflect the larger membership of the United Nations, not to accommodate a few ambitious States. The vast majority of Member States agree that adding more permanent members to the Security Council because of their size, power or wealth will not enhance the representativeness or the efficiency of the Council. On the contrary, new permanent members would further complicate the Council's decision-making and provoke new tensions in several regions of the world and, indeed, within the United Nations itself. We are nevertheless prepared to consider new ideas that will build consensus on the addition of elected members to the Security Council — elected and accountable to the general membership of the United Nations.

The General Assembly, the supreme body of the United Nations, must reassert the extensive authority that has been vested in it by the Charter. The Economic and Social Council must play the central policy role that was entrusted to it but which has been progressively ceded to other international organizations. The three principal United Nations bodies also need to work together, especially in addressing the growing number of complex crises with which the international community is confronted. Pakistan has proposed the composition of ad hoc committees, which deserves serious consideration.

Pakistan has consistently supported the efforts of the Secretary-General to streamline the Secretariat, strengthen its human resource base and adopt a results-based approach. In that context, two overarching

considerations are clear. First, the United Nations must be provided adequate financial resources to perform the myriad and growing tasks with which it has now been entrusted. Secondly, the intergovernmentally agreed priorities of the Organization must determine resources, and not the other way around.

There is now an emerging international consensus regarding the inextricable link between peace and development. We share the Secretary-General's assessment that the prospects for meeting the Millennium Development Goals remain uneven. That will threaten both development and peace. We are concerned that, despite an agreement on a broad strategy for global development, poverty levels and the rising disparities in wealth and opportunity within and between nations have been accentuated. There is a real risk of falling well short of realizing the Millennium Development Goals.

Pakistan would like to propose that, in the run-up to the high-level five-year review of the Millennium Declaration in 2005, we work out a concrete plan for a partnership for development based on four pillars: first, good national governance; secondly, adequate financing for development; thirdly, a fair international trading system and; fourthly, open access to technologies required for development. The 2005 event must focus on development. We should initiate preparations for that event at the fifty-ninth session, with a view to achieving a negotiated outcome that enjoys the consensus of the United Nations membership. That consensus must also address the needs of vulnerable groups of countries that continue to remain marginalized in the global economy — such as in sub-Saharan Africa, the least developed countries, the landlocked countries and the small island developing countries.

Mr. Al-Jomae (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I have the pleasure of joining previous speakers in conveying my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1) and to commend him for the huge undertaking involved in drafting the report.

The report is comprehensive in its presentation of the developments experienced by the international community in the past year. The report is also realistic when, in its opening pages, it points out that the United Nations has been through an extraordinarily challenging year. Observers of the international situation believe that the real reason for that is that many Member States have given up their commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations and have not respected international legally binding resolutions. Recent events in many parts of the world have illustrated that there is no place for unilateral action outside the framework of international legality in dealing with such current problems as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Terrorism constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Throughout the world, the sense of security is declining because of that phenomenon. We would like to emphasize that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia condemns terrorism in all its forms. My country has illustrated that by fully cooperating with, and taking part in international efforts to combat terrorism. It has also adhered to the relevant international conventions. In that connection, we would like to emphasize that any international effort to combat terrorism will not be able to fully eradicate this phenomenon if it fails to address the root causes of its emergence and spread.

Because my country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, believes that terrorism is a very serious international phenomenon that must be confronted in cooperation by all countries and Governments, my country announced from this rostrum that it plans to host an international conference on combating terrorism, to be held in the city of Riyadh on 5 February 2005. The purpose of the conference will be to exchange information and expertise and to make full use of the scientific and practical means available to combat terrorism and its relationship to money-laundering and trafficking in drugs and weapons.

The report of the Secretary-General has referred to the Organization's sincere efforts to achieve disarmament and to put an end to the evils of arms proliferation. It is clear that the international commitment to disarmament conventions has been weak. Everyone knows that we in the Middle East are living in a region of crises and conflicts in which Israel insists upon not adhering to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons or to subject its nuclear facilities to the international safeguards regime. We must therefore seize this opportunity to call upon the international community to underscore the importance of taking the necessary steps to guarantee that the Middle East becomes a zone free from all

weapons of mass destruction. That would lead to security and stability in both the region and the world.

The Millennium Declaration endorsed by heads of State or Government included the Millennium Goals, in the conviction that the United Nations is the best collective mechanism to confront the challenges and pressing issues before the international community. Those include, inter alia, putting an end to poverty and hunger and armed conflict; bringing about disarmament; and combating serious pandemics, including AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, among others. The United Nations has taken it upon itself to organize international conferences to address those issues and to come up with appropriate solutions. However, it is obvious that the efforts of the United Nations in that regard will be inadequate without clear collective international determination to face those challenges. Progress towards the attainment of those goals has thus far been unsatisfactory.

Mr. Musambachime (Zambia): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to extend to you, Sir, our congratulations on your assumption of the high office of President of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. My delegation is privileged to serve as one of the 21 Vice-Presidents of the session. We pledge our full cooperation to you in the discharge of your duties. I also wish to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Julian Robert Hunte of Saint Lucia, for the able manner in which he presided over the business of the fifty-eighth session. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend Secretary-General Kofi Annan, a distinguished son of Africa, for the able manner in which he steered the work of the United Nations since coming into office. His diplomatic skills have facilitated the effective handling of global threats to international peace and security.

Zambia welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, which is contained in document A/59/1. Our Organization has undertaken various efforts to promote peace and security in many regions and countries. Conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace-building and peacekeeping are instruments that have been utilized in our quest to achieve disarmament and establish peace and security in Member States.

Through those efforts our Organization has denied terrorists access to weapons of mass destruction and has helped curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which destabilizes States. In that regard, Zambia looks forward to the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which was appointed by the Secretary-General in November 2003. The appointment of the Panel was timely, when threats to international peace and security are on the increase. We reaffirm our readiness to cooperate with other Member States of the United Nations to enhance efforts in combating international terrorism.

As stated by the Secretary-General in his report, the plight of the peoples of Africa, where there are still many conflicts, is a top priority concern of our Organization.

Zambia looks forward to the high-level plenary meeting that will be convened at Headquarters in 2005 to review the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. We also firmly believe that all Member States have a collective responsibility to implement the commitments set forth in the Millennium Declaration. Similarly, Zambia hopes that the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which Africa is implementing, will complement and enhance the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Zambia supports the ongoing reform of the United Nations. It shares the concerns of other countries that that important process has not yet been completed. Zambia strongly believes that the reform should address the concerns of developing countries. In that regard, we look forward to progress reports on the reform.

Zambia appreciates the recent initiatives by the President of the fifty-eighth session on the revitalization, reform and enhancement of the working methods of the General Assembly, as the highest, deliberative and decision-making body of the United Nations. My delegation stands ready to continue actively participating in the reform process during this session.

Regarding the reform of the Security Council, Zambia remains concerned about the lack of progress. President Mwanawasa addressed that issue in his address to the General Assembly a few weeks ago. It is our hope that progress can be made on that issue.

Zambia believes in multilateralism, which continues to be an indispensable instrument to achieve

global consensus on important, life-saving issues. As a global community, we face challenges that are both transnational and interconnected in nature. It is essential that we take advantage of the immense problem-solving potential that multilateralism offers. As President Mwanawasa stated a few weeks ago, unilateralism should have no place in this global era.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a major concern in most of our countries. Zambia has been implementing the Southern African Development Community's Operational Programme on Prevention, Combating and Control of Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization, which was established in 1995, has been the major instrument in our region in the fight against the scourge of small arms and light weapons. However, my Government is particularly concerned about the continuing illicit trade associated with such arms, which often end up in the hands of non-State actors.

In conclusion, my Government reaffirms its commitment to multilateralism as a solution to the challenges that confront the world. It is in that regard that my delegation reiterates its commitment to working with the Secretary-General to implement the recommendations contained in his report.

Ms. Ramiro-Lopez (Philippines): My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/1), with its overarching message that the United Nations has done its best during the period under review to live by the mandate entrusted to it by the Charter, despite resource constraints and emerging challenges heretofore unforeseen.

My delegation concurs with the Secretary-General's conclusion that Member States, which make up the United Nations, should not relent in their continuous struggle for a world of greater justice. Indeed, peace is the centrepiece of the vision of a just world — inexorably made up of interdependent nations contributing their shared responsibilities in the pursuit of that vision. However, peace becomes durable only if the rule of law and the principle of multilateralism are universally observed.

The year under review witnessed an unprecedented upsurge in the demand for United Nations peacekeeping forces worldwide, which now include 16 missions involving 56,000 military personnel and 11,000 police personnel, not to mention the civilian components. Compounding the challenge to the United Nations is the huge cost involved in peacekeeping operations, which is slowly approaching the total budget of the Organization itself. That serious development is an indicator of the mounting challenges ahead of us.

The establishment of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which the Secretary-General set up last year, represents a timely and positive step in objectively examining the threats and challenges confronting the international community and in identifying the options to be taken to effectively address challenges.

However, many delegations look upon the report of the Panel, to be submitted to the Secretary-General on 1 December 2004, as a major input in the efforts to reform the Security Council. My delegation believes that there should be a holistic approach to examine ways to effectively address the worsening international security environment. Although the Charter of the United Nations gives the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the emergence of new forms of threats to international security — such as poverty, disease and international terrorism, to name a few — allows for a comprehensive approach involving other main bodies of the United Nations, namely the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Moreover, other affiliated United Nations agencies, with their own governing boards, should be brought to the fore in this collective effort to address security challenges. My delegation hopes that the Panel adopts a comprehensive approach in that regard.

Chapter VIII of the Charter allows regional organizations to initiate activities, with the prior authority of the Security Council, on the pacific settlement of disputes, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building. Regional organizations should therefore be tapped, not only because of the geographical stake they hold but also to help alleviate the resource constraints faced by the United Nations, to which regional organizations could contribute.

In September 2000, during the Millennium Summit, the leaders of 189 countries adopted the Millennium Declaration, which generated the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Millennium Declaration raised our hopes that the lives of 1 billion poor people around the world could be

alleviated from the dehumanizing conditions of abject poverty. Thus far, achieving the MDGs remains the biggest challenge that the international community has to face. If we are to achieve the MDGs, a number of implementation issues will have to be addressed at the national, regional and international levels.

There is a need to generate MDG-related data to improve the targeting of clientele and the identification of appropriate policy measures and interventions to address socio-economic and gender disparities. Accurate and comparable information is needed to enhance the monitoring of the MDGs across countries. Communication and advocacy campaigns have to be sustained to generate more interest, commitment and resources to achieve the MDGs. In popularizing the MDGs, we must seek the support of local Government units, parliamentary bodies, indigenous, private and civil society groups and the mass media.

It is our core belief that each country has the primary responsibility for its own development. Every country must come up with its own poverty-reduction strategy in the context of the MDGs. But a conducive, nurturing international environment must complement national efforts. That can only happen if developing countries enjoy an adequate space to apply appropriate policy instruments in such areas as trade, investment, technology and other specific economic activities.

The importance of official development assistance to assist developing countries to achieve the MDGs cannot be overemphasized. Developed countries must fulfil their commitments to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to official development assistance. The international community should likewise ensure a fair, rules-based and equitable multilateral trading system, to provide developing countries opportunities for income-generation, employment, trade and improved livelihoods. Economic security is ensured when the playing field is level for both developed and developing countries.

The international community should take a closer look at innovative ways to address the chronic debt problem in the developing world.

Developing countries must pursue much-needed reform to ensure the efficient use of resources and improve governance.

On the issue of governance, national policy measures must be geared towards addressing chronic graft and corruption and towards promoting transparency to improve investor confidence.

Priority should also be given to increasing food security, universal education, employment generation, health care and gender equality.

We must work simultaneously on several fronts in the war against HIV/AIDS. First, we must commit the required financial resources to address the problem of the millions around the world who suffer from HIV/AIDS, 90 per cent of whom are reported to be living below the poverty threshold. We commend the establishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to provide important financial resources, both at the country and community levels.

Secondly, Governments and civil society should reaffirm their political resolve to work together against HIV/AIDS. While there seems to be positive political momentum in that regard, we must continue to strengthen our Governments' cooperative links with civil society, international organizations and the private sector.

Lastly, we have to strengthen and improve the capacity of the countries concerned that need more training and skills-building. Capacity-building will be critical at all stages, particularly in the planning, implementation and evaluation stages.

We bear witness daily to atrocities perpetrated in the name of war: men and women, both young and old, are massacred or driven from their homes; public places are blasted; prisoners are tortured; women are raped; young boys and girls are forced to take up arms, and other barbaric acts take place. There are those who argue that those are just some of war's necessary evils. We believe, however, that they are not. We insist that they are outright violations of a universally recognized body of law known as international humanitarian law, the principles of which are embodied in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their amending protocols, as well as in the 1954 Hague Convention.

International humanitarian law has afforded protection to innumerable victims of violations of law. There is a general consensus, however, that the continued violation of humanitarian rules is a result of ignorance of humanitarian laws, or utter contempt for them. We therefore have a duty to ensure that treaties on international humanitarian law are known and

respected by our peoples. Merely acceding to them is not enough to guarantee their observance.

In that connection, the Philippines strongly supports efforts to strengthen and enhance the policy framework for the protection of civilians in armed conflict. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, there has been notable progress in the area of humanitarian law since the agenda on the protection of civilians trapped in war was launched five years ago. That should inspire us all the more to rededicate ourselves to the task of promoting greater consciousness in the ideals of humanitarian law.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1) has been presented in order to remind us once again of the enormous and wide-ranging challenges that the United Nations is facing today. In view of the nature of those challenges, as well due to progressive globalization and the increasing level of interdependency in today's international community, we strongly feel the need to keep our multilateral framework as credible as possible, so that we will be able to work out collective solutions to those challenges effectively.

I would today like to touch upon some of the issues we consider critical in reviewing the work of the United Nations over the past year.

Let me begin with Iraq. Stability in Iraq has a lot to do with peace and stability in the Middle East as a whole. I am convinced that the international community must make a united effort to support the transition process in Iraq, so that the country can return to the international community as early as possible as a stable and democratic nation that is friendly to its neighbouring countries. We believe that the United Nations has a leading role to play in that endeavour.

It is of vital importance that the political process be promoted by the Iraqi people themselves according to the timetable provided for in Security Council resolution 1546 (2004). The most urgent task in that regard is to carry out the elections to the Transitional National Assembly as scheduled, in January of next year. We strongly hope that the utmost effort will be made to hold inclusive elections with the participation of all major political factions. The support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq for the Independent Electoral Commission will be critical in ensuring fair and credible elections. It is our sincere hope that the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Qazi, will continue to provide leadership in that regard.

Japan has been actively participating in the international effort to assist the Iraqi people in rebuilding their country. It has pledged financial assistance amounting to $5 billion, and is steadily implementing it. Japan has also deployed its Self-Defence Forces in Iraq to provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. We will host the third donors' meeting of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq on 13 and 14 October in Tokyo. We are confident that the meeting will add further momentum to the concerted efforts of the international community to support Iraq. We expect that the meeting will also address the issues of support for the political process, including election support, and will provide us with a good opportunity to reconfirm our unified commitment.

In Afghanistan, the Bonn Process is reaching its final stage with the approach of the presidential election on 9 October, and parliamentary elections next year. The rebirth of Afghanistan as a democratic State is at stake in those elections. It is our sincere hope that the elections be conducted in a peaceful and fair manner, and that they will result in a successful outcome.

Japan, as the sponsor of the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan held in Tokyo in January 2002, has been playing a major role in assisting that country. Japan's regional comprehensive development assistance programme, known as the Ogata Initiative, aims at facilitating a seamless transition from humanitarian assistance to reconstruction and development assistance. We have been promoting the programme as a model for peace and human security in post-conflict situations.

Japan is also the lead country in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process, together with the United Nations. We will continue our efforts to support direct negotiations between the leaders of the transitional Government and regional commanders, implementation of the commander incentive programmes and promotion of reintegration programmes, so that the momentum for DDR can be maintained even after the presidential election. The reconstruction of Afghanistan is a touchstone in our

fight against terrorism. For that reason, it is essential that the international community continue its support for the efforts of the Afghan people.

Prime Minister Koizumi clearly stated in his address to the General Assembly during the general debate that there will be no stability and prosperity in the world until Africa's issues are resolved. In fact, Africa's issues pose serious challenges to the United Nations, both in achieving peace and security and in promoting development, including meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

In the Sudan, it is crucial that the Government and the rebels make every effort to reach a political settlement on Darfur, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1556 (2004) and 1564 (2004). All possible measures to improve the security conditions in the region must be taken, beginning with the disarming of the militias in order to halt attacks against civilians. To ensure an end to the current climate of impunity, all those responsible for the massive human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law must urgently be brought to justice. In this regard, we highly appreciate the steps taken by the African Union (AU) for the resolution of the Darfur issue. The international community must continue to assist the efforts of the AU.

In addressing the issue of peace and security in Africa, we are of the view that it is important for African countries to exercise ownership to a greater extent. International support to enhance Africa's capacity for managing conflicts is certainly necessary, but Africa's ownership efforts are the most important element. Japan is strengthening its partnership with the AU through dialogue, so as to enable the AU to play an even more constructive role in peace-building activities.

Japan hosted the Third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III), last year. Since the beginning of the TICAD process in 1993, Japan has been steadily providing wide-ranging assistance to Africa. The consolidation of peace, poverty reduction through economic growth and human-centred development are the three main pillars of our undertaking there.

The consolidation of peace and realization of human security are urgent and essential tasks for Africa. A society impoverished by armed conflict remains in a precarious state. Africa stands at the crossroads between peace and national rebirth, on the one hand, and a return to armed conflict, on the other. Under such circumstances, promoting human security enables such a society to move towards peace and robust national reconstruction. Japan advocates the importance of promoting human security and is firmly committed to providing assistance through such channels as the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, in order to promote the protection and empowerment of individuals.

An effective strategy for disaster reduction is one of the key elements in attaining sustainable development. A natural disaster can wipe out the fruits of years of development efforts in an instant. Japan is to host in Kobe next January the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, and it is committed to the success of that Conference.

In another critical sector, that of water and sanitation, Japan is also taking a leading role. In fact, Japan is now the largest contributor in this sector, having provided approximately one third of the worldwide development assistance for drinking water and sanitation in the last three years. Japan's former Prime Minister, Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, currently chairs the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation. My country intends to continue its active engagement in this field.

Terrorist activities show no sign of ceasing. Acts of terror continue to claim innocent lives, including those of children. Japan strongly condemns those atrocious acts and acutely feels the necessity of further strengthening international cooperation aimed at deterring such violence. We continue to support the activities of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al Qaeda and the Taliban and Associated Individuals and Entities, and offer them our full cooperation.

The realization of justice and the rule of law is a fundamental element of a stable society. It is also a necessary means to deterring the recurrence of violent conflict. The importance of ownership should be emphasized in this area as well. Each country has the primary responsibility of establishing justice and the rule of law within its own borders. The United Nations, when it extends assistance in this field, should honour the ownership of the recipient countries and give due

consideration to the support and participation of the people.

Japan welcomes the fact that Cambodia's national assembly has approved the agreement with the United Nations with regard to the Khmer Rouge trials. We expect that the further necessary steps will be taken for its prompt ratification. We also sincerely hope that the United Nations will make the necessary preparations with all due haste. Japan, having played a central role in supporting Cambodia's efforts to carry out the trials, urges Member States to make an active contribution to the process with a view to an early realization of the trials.

Through our experience in ad hoc tribunals, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), we have learned that the administrative organizations of such tribunals that are financed through assessed contributions can grow far larger than necessary. That being the case, we need to identify the most efficient and effective form of organization for international tribunals.

My country is increasingly concerned about the rapid expansion of the United Nations regular budget as well as the peacekeeping budget. In order to earn the support of our taxpayers, the United Nations must always be mindful of the need to demonstrate that it is committed to utilizing limited resources properly and with the utmost efficiency.

I would also like to touch upon some aspects of the management of our Organization. Japan considers that the scale of assessments for Member States needs to be more balanced. Another point I would like to emphasize is that we are still a long way from realizing equitable geographical representation with regard to the nationalities of the staff in the United Nations Secretariat. The current condition of severe underrepresentation must be redressed as a matter of priority.

As the Secretary-General's report suggests, the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations will provide us with a good opportunity for fresh thinking about the problems of our world and how the United Nations can address them. In this context, I am pleased to note that the work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change seems to be progressing as scheduled. It is our strong hope that their report will present a number of inspiring ideas on which to reflect. In our view, one of our vital tasks in this session is to duly follow up the report of the Panel. We need to create a new United Nations for the new era and a multilateral framework that will enable us to cope with new threats and challenges more effectively.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): We congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election and wish you well in the important work ahead.

We thank the Secretary-General for presenting his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1), which maps out the daunting tasks before the United Nations. Rather than addressing any of the specific issues, I will concentrate on a prerequisite for success in general: the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly and the strengthening of the United Nations system.

Iceland welcomes the successful implementation of resolutions 58/126 and 58/316 on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, adopted at the fifty-eighth session of the Assembly, and looks forward to further improvements of our work. Iceland appreciates the memorandum by the Secretary-General on the organization of the current session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items (A/BUR/59/1), in which agenda items are organized under headings corresponding to the priorities of the Organization as contained in the medium-term plan.

It is in the spirit of efficiency that Iceland has decided to address in its statement today, under the heading "Organizational, administrative and other matters", items that were also covered during last Monday's debate on revitalization and that will be dealt with at next Monday's debate on Security Council reform.

Enhancing the authority and the role of the General Assembly and improving the Assembly's working methods should continue to be based on the good work already carried out. New rules for the exchange of information between the two bodies — the General Assembly and the Security Council — through periodic reports from the Council to the Assembly and through formal consultations — as decided in resolution 58/126 — should increase the transparency and thereby the efficiency of the Organization.

Streamlining the work of the General Assembly is, however, part of a much greater challenge to adjust

our multilateral structures to deal with threats to global security. The recommendations of the Secretary-General in the light of the work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will serve as a valuable step towards the reform we have long called for.

The delicate question of reform of the Security Council has long occupied our work. Although reform of the Council will not solve all our problems, failure to address that issue will act as a brake on effective revitalization in other areas. Iceland has persistently called for reform of the Security Council in order to make it more representative. The current composition of the Council mirrors neither today's geopolitical realities nor the increased membership of the United Nations. At the same time, the Council's efficiency in coping with the serious issues on its agenda must be ensured. The Icelandic Government supports an increase in the non-permanent category, as well as the allocation of permanent seats to Japan, India, Germany and Brazil. Africa must also be ensured a permanent seat on the Council.

Iceland strongly believes that changes are long overdue. If we grasp this chance for reform, 60 years after the founding of the United Nations, the Organization will strengthen its role as the forum for addressing major threats to the world's security in the future. We are prepared to work together with other delegations to ensure a good reception of the results of the Panel's work. Iceland looks forward to what the Secretary-General characterized as bold and practicable recommendations of the High-level Panel and to his recommendations based on the Panel's report.

Mr. Mubarez (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): The report of the Secretary-General (A/59/1) now before us for consideration covers a number of facts with regard to what the Organization has been doing in several areas over the past year — facts that we encounter in our collective activities and that encourage us to share many of the conclusions drawn by the Secretary-General. Before I make detailed comments on the report, I should commend the Secretary-General for its comprehensiveness, and its presentation of facts and visions.

We agree with the Secretary-General that last year was filled with challenges for the United Nations — multiple challenges that added to the burden of the Organization and in many cases exceeded the scope of its resources. Unfortunately, that was accompanied by a split in multilateral action and the continued use of unilateralism, which runs counter to the requirements for mutual trust and collective security.

Statements made at this session reflect the views and the determination of the entire international community with regard to the adoption of structural reforms whose institutional concepts are needed for the strengthening of international multilateral action. Our country has always supported that approach because we are firmly convinced that only through international multilateral action can we effectively address collective security challenges and the requirements of globalization. This can be achieved through regional and international institutions, especially this Organization.

We are pleased to note in the report of the Secretary-General that the Organization has undertaken efforts in several areas to meet the increasing demands of those challenges and that we need to adapt to changes in the international sphere. While we agree with the anticipated recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, we strongly believe that the best way to attain our objectives remains participation, whether it is a question of taking decisions at the international level or implementing chapter II of the report, on achieving peace and security. That chapter gives us a true picture of innovative methods as well as of United Nations work that moves beyond the maintenance of peace and security to peace-building and the building of international institutions.

The Organization's achievements in meeting its humanitarian responsibilities are satisfactory. Paragraph 84 of the report states that the number of refugees has decreased by nearly 1 million persons for two consecutive years. We are pleased to note the initiative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees aimed at repatriating refugees both to relieve their sufferings and to assist countries that host them. We also appreciate the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to provide basic assistance to Palestinian refugees, despite the constant shortfall in its budget, which makes it impossible for it to fully meet their needs, as noted in paragraph 106. It

can provide only limited services to some of those refugees.

Paragraph 100 also states clearly that the continuing Israeli aggression against the population of the occupied Palestinian territories is exacerbating the sufferings of the Palestinian refugees and that the situation there remains tragic. Joint action is a necessity, not an option, to meet these challenges and changes and to address the varied interests of the parties involved. We must adapt our working methods to new realities, and we therefore eagerly await the report to be submitted by the High-level Panel as well as preparations for the Millennium Summit+5 conference focusing on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. We unreservedly support the views and ideas put forward at the Millennium Summit regarding reform of the United Nations, as it is the main institution for international collective action.

We note with interest greater participation by non-governmental organizations. The partnership that has been proposed will enhance and strengthen democratization in the work of the Organization. However, we must be cautious here. We must give greater consideration to this issue so as to ensure the best possible partnerships among the United Nations and civil society organizations.

We believe that priority should be accorded to the strengthening of civil society institutions in developing countries. We must promote participation at the local level before moving to the international one.

Finally, allow me to express our appreciation for the report submitted to us by the Secretary-General. My delegation is prepared to cooperate with you, Mr. President, to help make this session a success, so that we can move forward in our common work.

Mr. Ngo Duc Thang (Viet Nam): Let me begin by joining previous speakers in reiterating my delegation's appreciation of the Secretary-General's annual report on the work of the Organization. We note with satisfaction that the issues of international peace and security and sustainable development have been highlighted in the report as primary tasks on the agenda of the Organization.

As mentioned by the Secretary-General in the introduction to his report, the past year has been a very challenging year for the United Nations — from the controversies surrounding the Iraq crisis to continuing violent conflicts, international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, the spread of infectious diseases, extreme poverty and hunger, environmental degradation and human rights violations.

In the mix of those many challenges, for many of the world's peoples the threats posed by extreme poverty and hunger as well as by deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS are no less serious and are more immediate than those posed by weapons of any kind. It is urgent that, while continuing to cope with traditional threats, we try to find solutions to emerging new ones. We wish to express our deep appreciation of the Secretary-General's decision to appoint a High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We look forward to receiving the Panel's report and hope that the recommendations contained therein will form a good basis for careful consideration by Member States of timely actions for change.

From Iraq to the Middle East and Africa, violent conflicts and hostilities continue to threaten the lives of millions of civilians. In many other parts of the world, tension remains or keeps escalating, threatening international peace and security. The report provides an in-depth analysis of the performance, progress and shortcomings of the Organization in bringing peace, independence and reconciliation to the countries concerned. The Vietnamese delegation shares the unanimous view that the crucial role of the United Nations needs to be further enhanced to tackle the challenges facing us.

In that connection, we welcome resolution 58/269, which was recently adopted and reaffirms the vital role of the United Nations in the field of the maintenance of global peace and security as well as the promotion of international cooperation. We deeply appreciate the Secretary-General's tireless efforts aimed at strengthening the Organization's capacity in the area of the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts, including peacekeeping and peace-building activities. We encourage the speedier development of a comprehensive and coherent conflict-prevention strategy to respond effectively to the challenges posed by the peacekeeping and peace-building processes.

Terrorism has become the most pressing danger and challenge. Viet Nam condemns all acts of terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations. We support the Secretary-General's view on the need for

broad international cooperation to fight this scourge. We are pleased to note from the report that there is close cooperation among relevant agencies such as the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, and the Department of Public Information to coordinate and reinvigorate the global response to terrorism. We wish to reaffirm here the position of the Vietnamese Government that, in order to mobilize broad participation and maintain its own legitimacy, the fight against terrorism must be free from any selectivity or double standard.

Even as many developing countries face major difficulties resulting from a lack of financial resources for activities aimed at eradicating poverty and hunger, not to mention development projects, hundreds of billions of dollars continue to be wasted in an ongoing arms race. The report mentioned the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as a cause of continued great concern and noted several positive signs relating to disarmament. We think, however, that the report would have been more comprehensive if the lack of progress in the proceedings of major United Nations disarmament bodies such as the Disarmament Commission — especially in the area of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction — had been reflected and recommendations made to overcome the problem.

We commend the efforts of the Organization to meet its humanitarian commitments. We share the Secretary-General's concern over the persistent underfunding of humanitarian action.

My delegation commends the Secretary-General and supports the good work he has been doing and the leadership he has been providing in the area of cooperation for development. We are pleased that the report has placed at the centre of the work of the Organization the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), such as tackling poverty to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor; fighting diseases such as HIV/AIDS; preventing drug trafficking; and protecting the environment.

We share the concern about the lack of financial resources to implement the MDGs, and we fully support the Secretary-General's call on donor nations to meet the target of devoting 0.7 per cent of gross national product to official development assistance and to expand available funds to reinforce financing for development and the promotion of sustainable development. We concur with the Secretary-General in emphasizing that balanced and equitable international trade is one of the important ways to assist developing and least developed countries in achieving the MDGs. We also fully support the Secretary-General's call for international commitments on the part of other stakeholders — including the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, the private sector and civil society — in order to create more democratic and open world trade and financial systems.

My last comment is related to the work of the Organization in the area of management. My delegation wishes to commend the initiatives and proposals put forward by the Secretary-General in his report to improve the capacity and efficiency of the United Nations. We have taken note with great interest of the Secretary-General's new proposals to replace the current four-year medium-term plan with a new biennial strategic framework and a redesigned programme performance report. We fully support that strategic framework, which improves managerial accountability. With regard to human resources management, my delegation would again like to underscore the need to further enhance the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations recruitment process. We wish to stress that any system of recruitment should take into consideration the need to ensure equitable representation at the United Nations.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization before us (A/59/1) makes it clear both how impressive the activities and achievements of the United Nations are and how complex and challenging are the tasks it faces. It offers a rare glimpse into the range of undertakings of the Organization and can serve as a useful tool in defending the Organization against its numerous detractors, whose arguments are as often based on ignorance as they are on malevolence. The report can even be used as a reference book, since it offers a concise account of the history and state of play in the areas where the Organization is actively involved. A more analytical reading, however, leads to the significant question of whether the Organization is truly equipped to successfully tackle all the issues before it.

All its mandates, of course, are given to the United Nations by us, the Member States; and one must wonder whether we are fully living up to our responsibilities in that respect. The most complex problems of a globalized world — such as, for example, combating terrorism, HIV/AIDS and the eradication of poverty — are handed over to the United Nations to deal with them. While we almost automatically do this, we have been negligent in supplying the Organization with the tools to do the job. At the core of a successful United Nations is the unequivocal commitment from its Member States to multilateralism. The most credible and effective expression of that commitment is unwavering political and financial support, as well as ongoing work to adjust the United Nations to the changed, and changing, circumstances in which it works.

The expectations concerning the outcome of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change are high, and we share them. Nevertheless, the decisions that need to be made cannot be outsourced; we have to make them ourselves. Changes in the institutional architecture are necessary and inevitable. The United Nations cannot remain a reflection of its history, but must be designed in a manner that reflects the current challenges.

The year 2005 will be a decisive one. We must think early about how to make the next year a successful one from the intergovernmental side. It seems crucial to us that we agree at an early stage on a comprehensive and interconnected agenda. It must be clear, in particular, that development and security are mutually reinforcing and inseparable, which means that one cannot be dealt with successfully if the other is neglected. In that connection, the Millennium Development Goals must be at the core of our deliberations, as they constitute the biggest promise we have made collectively and the most ambitious goal we have set for ourselves.

We believe that institutional changes are needed, and we also believe that they must be carried out in a manner that preserves, and indeed improves, the institutional balance of the Organization. A more modern and more representative Security Council must be complemented by a leaner, more flexible and more relevant General Assembly that truly fulfils the tasks assigned to it under the Charter. The enlargement of the Security Council is a necessity. If we were to fail to seize the growing momentum in that respect, we would probably squander the opportunity to do so for a long time to come. However, the highly political question of enlargement must not distract us from effectively dealing with the other elements of Security Council reform that must be addressed simultaneously. We believe that only a more representative and more accountable Security Council will be able to effectively tackle threats to international peace and security on behalf of the international community as a whole.

The report pays tribute to the victims of the attack on United Nations headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August 2003, and rightly so. We must remember that most painful event and be determined to take the action that is our responsibility. The security conditions under which United Nations staff operate throughout the world must be improved and the relevant mechanism, at Headquarters but especially in the field, must be enhanced. We look forward to the relevant suggestions of the Secretary-General in that respect, and will continue working on the important aspect of legal protection in particular. At the same time, we must ensure that the United Nations remains committed to its most important function, which is to bestow legitimacy upon international and collective action. We therefore very much welcome the vision of the Secretary-General in placing the respect for the rule of law at the top of his agenda for the coming months and years.

Mr. Wali (Nigeria): I would like to express the appreciation of the delegation of Nigeria to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his report on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/59/1. The report has highlighted some of the most challenging issues confronting the international community. These include conflict prevention and resolution, terrorism, natural disasters, disease control, disarmament and arms control, poverty and sustainable development. The report, which has ably reviewed the efforts of our Organization to secure a constructive and enduring solution to fundamental global problems, has also drawn attention to the complexities of the tasks confronting humanity.

It is in this context that Nigeria views with concern the persistence of conflicts in many regions of the world. We therefore commend the efforts of the United Nations, through the Security Council, to maintain international peace and security. While the United Nations has achieved some measure of success,

we still need to do more to usher in durable peace and stability in conflict-ravaged areas.

Nigeria also commends the efforts of the Secretary-General in his continued use of preventive diplomacy and of special envoys for peacemaking and peace-building in the maintenance of international peace and security. To some extent, we have achieved the targets set in the Millennium Declaration, despite the rather discouraging surge in the global demand for peacekeeping operations.

We note with satisfaction that, with the assistance of the United Nations, regional organizations are becoming more focused and proactive in the maintenance of international peace and security, through the establishment of institutional cooperation for conflict prevention, management and resolution. In this regard, we commend the assistance extended to the African Union for the establishment of its Peace and Security Council, the African Standby Force and the Military Staff Committee. We note with satisfaction the assistance and cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), particularly in the areas of peacekeeping and peace-building in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone.

ECOWAS has been able to address complex humanitarian issues in the subregion, thanks to the cooperative efforts of the United Nations. We urge the international community to extend financial and logistical support to ECOWAS and the African Union in order to enhance their capacity for the maintenance of peace and security in the subregion.

We endorse the memorandum of understanding and the programme of work between ECOWAS and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. We appreciate that that involves joint activities in the areas of governance, security sector reform, electoral assistance, youth unemployment and the control and circulation of small arms and light weapons.

As the world continues to suffer the devastating consequences of terrorist acts, Nigeria reaffirms its condemnation of international terrorism. We pledge our cooperation with other members of the international community, through bilateral and multilateral efforts, to combat this menace in all its forms. Accordingly, we condemn the recent terrorist attack on a school in Beslan, Russia, and reaffirm our support for Security Council resolution 1502 (2003) on the protection of civilians and humanitarian and United Nations personnel in conflict areas. We condemn in the strongest terms all acts of terrorism, and urge firm action by all members of the international community to deny support of any kind to terrorists and their cohorts.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to pose serious concern to the international community, in particular developing countries, since it contributes to conflicts and political instability. The excessive accumulation and easy availability of small arms and light weapons hinders peace-building and development efforts and threatens human security. In this regard, the ECOWAS moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in West Africa has been a useful mechanism for a coordinated and sustainable regional approach to controlling this menace.

We reiterate our commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in July 2001. We urge the international community to control the movement of such weapons, especially to non-State actors. While we note the progressive decrease in the production and transfer of landmines, it is regrettable that they continue to impede the development and security of populations, especially in African States that are emerging from conflict. In this regard, we urge the international community to strengthen its support for the United Nations Mine Action Service, as that is the principal coordinating body of the United Nations for curbing the menace of landmines.

Another major threat facing the United Nations and the international community is the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, especially the dangerous possibility of their acquisition by individuals and terrorist groups. Although there are agreements and conventions governing the production, use, stockpiling and transfer of such weapons, the lack of transparency and commitment in the implementation of their provisions have regrettably eroded respect for compliance. In particular, lack of progress on broad disarmament measures regarding nuclear weapons is not in the best interests of the international community. We therefore call on the parties to those conventions to honour their obligations in the interests of international peace and security.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to pose grave challenges to our developmental efforts. We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations and the contribution of the international community to combating this scourge, particularly in Africa. We reiterate our commitment to the framework for action adopted at the African Union's special summit of African leaders in Abuja, and the African Union Summit held this year in Addis Ababa, to intensify their efforts and mobilize resources for the prevention, care and treatment of people infected by the disease.

In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders resolved, among other things, to eliminate poverty by launching a sustained campaign to make the right to development a reality for all nations. In this regard, African Governments are giving prominence to the Millennium Development Goals in their strategic development planning and budgetary allocations. They have also agreed to encourage public-private partnership and broad-based participation in the planning and implementation of development programmes. The strategy is for Governments to create an enabling environment, while the private sector assumes a leadership role in economic development and the provision of services.

While these are imperative measures for Africa to undertake, the international community has an obligation to fulfil the commitments and promises that it made decades ago on economic development assistance. We therefore call on our development partners to deliver on their official development assistance commitments, which they reaffirmed in Monterrey and Johannesburg.

Nigeria reaffirms its support for the priority accorded by the United Nations to the special needs of Africa, with the establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. We note with satisfaction the continued efforts of the Office to facilitate the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In this regard, we commend the Office of the Special Adviser for the publication of *South-South Cooperation in Support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development: Experiences of Africa-Latin America and the Caribbean*.

Nigeria endorses the appointment of the independent panel of eminent persons to review and assess the scope and adequacy of international support for NEPAD and to conduct dialogue with Africa's development partners, with a view to promoting support for NEPAD. We look forward to the recommendations of the panel.

The Charter of the United Nations and other sources of international law have established conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties can be maintained. The rule of law is becoming more widely accepted, and States are increasingly employing treaties to regulate their relations. We commend the support and assistance provided by the United Nations to the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and for the former Yugoslavia, as well as to the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

In conclusion, Nigeria is pleased to note that the Secretary-General has made commendable efforts towards strengthening the effectiveness of our Organization. We are satisfied with the various initiatives that have been put in place, and we pledge our continued cooperation with all efforts to strengthen our Organization.

Mr. Balestra (San Marino): On this occasion, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the report contained in document A/59/1. It lists all the work accomplished, all the work not accomplished, all our frustrations and all our hopes and contains a call to fulfil all our commitments and obligations. Following the invitation to be brief, I will touch on only a few points of the report.

Sadly, the general sense prevailing among us is that the international community will not succeed in reaching the objectives of the United Nations Millennium Declaration by 2015. It is encouraging, however, to acknowledge that the Secretary-General believes that it will still be possible to achieve some of the time-bound and measurable goals set in the Declaration, if developed and developing countries institute the right combination of national and international policies and implement their shared commitments, as set forth in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus. San Marino thinks that this is the main conclusion we should draw from the Secretary-General's report. If we want to achieve our common objectives, we must honour the accepted commitments and apply the agreed policies. The time for action has arrived.

In the context of macroeconomic policies, one element in the Secretary-General's report caught my

attention: the range of actions that Governments, public development institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations can undertake to spur the growth of small and medium-size businesses. This is an area that should be enhanced, in particular for some developing countries, since, linked with a policy of microcredits, it would favour the development of small businesses and facilitate the participation of women and young people in the economic life of their country. We believe we have some authority to recommend this process, since it has been implemented in San Marino, although in a different context, and has been a winning policy for our economy for many years.

The insufficiency of financial assistance and the inadequacy of the tools in our hands are apparent in all areas of international cooperation, but are particularly evident in the fight against natural disasters. Environmental degradation and climate changes are — and will be — provoking natural disasters of increasing intensity. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the United Nations institutions in this field, in both the prevention of natural disasters and the provision of humanitarian assistance to the victims.

San Marino welcomes the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report entitled "Reducing disaster risk: a challenge for development", identifying the vulnerability of countries to three key natural hazards: earthquakes, tropical cyclones and floods. San Marino also welcomes the United Nations University's launching of a programme to reduce the risk of catastrophic floods in Asia and the Pacific. Similar programmes could also be implemented to address disasters of a different nature and in other regions of the globe.

San Marino agrees with the Secretary-General when he states that the fight against terrorism must be firmly advanced with determination and with full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. Since the tragic 11 September attack on the United States, the international community has become aware of the seriousness of terrorism. Recurrent dramatic events worldwide, such as the violent attacks perpetrated in Iraq and in other parts of the world against not only soldiers but also civilians, the media and even non-governmental organization humanitarian mission staff, make imperative a search for a common and effective response based on stronger joint commitments.

We cannot deny that an effective strategy against terrorism still remains to be found. The activity of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) seems to have stalled, after an initial élan. The proposal by Costa Rica to create a high commissioner for terrorism should be explored further, as it would involve the Security Council as well as the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in the fight against terrorism, allowing us to fight not only the results, but also the deep causes of terrorism.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): I would like to start by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization.

As the scope of action of the United Nations is too broad to be adequately dealt with in its entirety at this juncture, I shall focus on the following two aspects, which in our view are inextricably linked: achieving peace and security and cooperating for development. I shall also refer to the question of the reform of the Organization, an issue that will permeate the work of the Organization throughout the coming 12 months.

As the report rightly states, the United Nations has been through an extraordinarily challenging year. In terms of the maintenance of international peace and security, the situation in Iraq alone would, in our view, be sufficient to demonstrate the magnitude of the challenges facing the Organization. Barely one year ago, the tragic attack against the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad took the lives of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Iraq and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and of other dedicated members of the United Nations staff in that country.

As a member of the Security Council for the period of 2004 to 2005, Brazil has been involved in the discussions regarding the situation in Iraq in a constructive spirit, and has striven to contribute to the reconstruction of that country. Iraq, however, is only one of the many challenges facing the Council. During the first nine months of Brazil's current mandate in the Security Council, the Council has — to mention some of the major decisions taken — reformed and revitalized the main subsidiary committees entrusted with combating terrorism, namely the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al Qaeda and the Taliban and Associated Individuals and Entities and the CTC. The

Council also established a new committee to deal with the question of non-State actors' possible access to weapons of mass destruction.

In addition, the need for and the deployment of peacekeeping operations increased dramatically. Between civilian staff and military personnel, more than 67,000 people are involved in United Nations-mandated operations. During the period in question, new operations were created in Burundi, Haiti, Liberia and the Sudan, as the report of the Secretary-General indicates.

In Haiti, Brazil is contributing more than 1,200 military personnel to the stabilization efforts. We have accepted the responsibility of commanding the forces of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, with the important participation of other Latin American countries, on the clear understanding that peace in that nation in our hemisphere will require a long-term commitment from the international community — a commitment not only to security, but also to socio-economic progress. This leads to the necessity of increasing cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, two of the main bodies of this Organization, an issue to which I will return later.

President Lula opened the general debate of the current session of the General Assembly with a wide-ranging presentation of Brazil's perception of the most pressing challenges facing the world today. The key element in this vision is the idea that the foundation of peace is social justice. As President Lula stated, a world in which hunger and poverty prevail cannot be a peaceful world.

As I turn to issues in the social and economic sphere, I must refer to the high-level plenary meetings scheduled to take place at the opening of the next session of the General Assembly. The event on the review of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration constitutes the appropriate setting for the adoption of the necessary measures and actions to make viable the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015. There is a consensual appreciation that the decisions to be adopted next year will be crucial for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

In this regard, the President of Brazil, together with the Presidents of France, Chile and Spain, and with the support of the Secretary-General, launched an "Action Against Hunger and Poverty" at a summit meeting attended by more than 50 world leaders gathered here in New York on the day before the opening of the general debate. More than 100 countries have already endorsed the New York Declaration on the Action against Hunger and Poverty, adopted at that summit meeting. The initiative achieved the intended objective of renewing the political will to search for new sources of financing. We are confident it will also be an important contribution to the success of the large upcoming event of 2005 reviewing the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration, and to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Secretary-General entrusted the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change with the crucial task of identifying the problems faced by the Organization and with recommending the adjustments needed to correct the current situation. We look forward to the recommendations now being prepared by the Panel.

The Panel must avoid restricting its consideration of threats and challenges from the perspective of problems to be dealt with through coercion or the use of force. Its approach must be comprehensive, and its recommendations should encompass measures to strengthen not only the Security Council but also the other principal organs of the Organization.

In particular, the Panel must do its best to avoid expanding the scope of action of the Council in a manner that might detract from the mandated functions of other organs. Similarly, the Panel must make every effort to avoid misinterpreting current trends in the Council. The phenomenal increase in Council activity since the end of the cold war is an indication not only that the major impediments for the adoption of decisions were overcome, but also, and perhaps even more importantly, that the very foundations for international peace and security were becoming increasingly fragile.

As the Panel carries out its mandate, it must not overlook the international community's call for greater multilateralism. Heeding the main issues identified by the Secretary-General in his presentation of the report on the work of the Organization in the past two years, the Panel must present recommendations that will help right to prevail.

Brazil has well-known views with regard to the central issue of reform of the Organization, which I

will briefly reiterate as they relate to the principal organs at Headquarters. The Security Council must be strengthened and made more legitimate. Its composition, in particular relating to its permanent membership, cannot remain unaltered. The United Nations can no longer ignore the emergence on the international scene of developing countries that have become actors and often exercise a critical role in promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Council must incorporate, on a permanent basis, countries that have the will and the capacity to take on major responsibilities with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. Better representation means wider legitimacy, and wider legitimacy will lead to greater efficiency and efficacy in the work of the Council.

The Economic and Social Council, for its part, must regain the role bestowed upon it by the Charter. The causes of peace and social and economic development will be better served by an Economic and Social Council that is able to cooperate fully and actively with the Security Council in preventing conflicts and in nation-building. Better cooperation between these two bodies under Article 65 of the Charter is also a necessity. The scope of multilateral cooperation in conflict management and peace-building would thereby be broadened. Let us not forget that the Economic and Social Council, and not the Security Council, is the Charter organ with responsibility for matters relating to social and economic development.

One of the ways to improve the functioning of the Security Council itself is to empower the Economic and Social Council to fulfil its tasks, thus reducing the burden on the ever-increasing agenda of the Security Council.

The General Assembly, being the universal democratic organ, must be reinforced politically so as to guide the work of the Organization overall and to rekindle its status as the forum that traditionally embodies and gives voice to the purposes and principles of the Charter. Its function as the main deliberative and policy-making organ of the United Nations must be reasserted.

Next year promises to be decisive in the work of the Organization. As the Secretary-General put it in addressing our Presidents, Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers at the 3rd meeting of the current session of the General Assembly, "If you ... cannot reach agreement on the way forward, history will take the decisions for you, and the interests of your peoples may go by default."

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, let me express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization, which, in fact, covers the entire agenda of the United Nations.

The maintenance of international peace and security remains the main priority for the international community. We fully agree with the conclusion that durable international peace could be built only on foundations of interdependence, rule of law and multilateralism. Kazakhstan believes that the United Nations acts as a guarantor of international law.

The report of the Secretary-General clearly demonstrates that the United Nations, carrying out a wide range of activities that reflect all the major international problems, has a great potential in coordinating the efforts of States to confront formidable challenges.

International terrorism continues to pose a threat to humanity. Countering this threat effectively requires the consolidation and coordination of global efforts on the basis of the generally recognized norms and principles of international law, with the leading and coordinating role being played by the United Nations.

It is crucial in that respect that the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee more actively seek to develop new approaches to coordinating technical assistance to States, while closely linking such assistance to the strengthening of interaction with international and regional organizations. We believe that with the current escalation of international terrorism, the role of the Committee should become more important.

Kazakhstan has acceded to 11 international counter-terrorism conventions and calls for the earliest possible finalization by the United Nations of the drafting of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism and an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

The Government of Kazakhstan continues to increase its efforts to implement the Security Council resolutions in this sphere, including 1267 (1999), 1373 (2001), 1456 (2003) and 1535 (2004). The results of

those efforts are reflected in relevant national reports submitted by Kazakhstan.

My country supports United Nations peacekeeping efforts and the continued strengthening of its capacity in that area. With escalating humanitarian crises and armed conflicts, as effectively demonstrated by the developments in Darfur, the United Nations must pay special attention to the possibility of broader participation of authoritative regional and subregional organizations in peacekeeping operations; this would allow a more effective and more timely response to emerging threats.

Prevention, post-conflict peace-building and the protection of civilians in armed conflict are the key elements of the complex respons: of the United Nations to emerging crisis situations. Kazakhstan is therefore a firm supporter of preventive diplomacy and continues to believe that the establishment of a Central Asian preventive diplomacy centre would be a timely initiative.

Shared responsibility is a core element of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted by world leaders in September 2000. Today, it has become clear that the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals is a reality for some countries and a distant hope for others.

It will be possible to reverse this trend only by developing international partnerships and building on the momentum gained at the turn of the millennium. We have 11 more years to achieve all of the goals set at the Millennium Summit. That is not very long. But even in that short period of time it is still possible to attain the agreed development targets. We believe that in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals we should apply a new focused approach to the assistance being provided to the least developed and geographically vulnerable States, including the landlocked countries, and create a favourable environment for their economic development under conditions of peace and stability.

A key factor for success could be an increase, in the near future, by the developed countries of their official development assistance to up to 0.7 per cent of their gross national product. Other important conditions include the mobilization of the domestic resources of the developing countries; a favourable climate for their exports; the prompt settlement of the debt of the poorest countries; and assistance to the Governments of the least developed countries for the expansion and strengthening of their educational programmes related to HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

During the World Leaders Summit on Action Against Hunger and Poverty, which was held at United Nations Headquarters last month, heads of State or Government declared that hunger jeopardizes the very concept of sustainable development — devised, against all odds, at the conferences held in New York, Monterrey and Johannesburg — and, together with poverty and social injustice, creates a serious threat to the security of States and entire regions of the world.

Kazakhstan firmly supports the main provisions of the Final Declaration of the Summit and believes that its outcome will provide much-needed impetus to our joint efforts to address critical issues in our action against hunger and poverty.

Poverty is a problem faced by virtually all developing countries and economies in transition, including Kazakhstan. My Government pays priority attention to efforts to combat poverty, and this has helped us to achieve significant progress in that important sphere. Unfortunately, the relevant United Nations reports contain some significant inaccuracies and, as a result, the international community has been provided with distorted information about the social and economic situation in my country.

The issue of rehabilitation after natural and ecological disasters remains, as before, a focus of the United Nations. Kazakhstan is grateful to the United Nations and donor countries for their attention to the problems of the Semipalatinsk region and the Aral Sea area, as well as for their support, and calls on the international community to intensify its efforts to solve those problems. We believe that a special General Assembly resolution on the Aral Sea has long been overdue, since continued degradation of the environment of the region seriously affects the health and livelihood of the population.

Next year we will celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. This will provide an excellent opportunity for us to take a fresh look at the problems of our world and the ways in which our Organization can address them. Kazakhstan is ready to contribute to that critically important process.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.